Globalization and the Roman empire: the genealogy of 'Empire'

> the Roman Empire is worth studying … not as a means of understanding better how to run an empire and dominate other countries, or finding a justification for humanitarian or military intervention, but as a means of understanding and questioning modern conceptions of empire and imperialism, and the way they are deployed in contemporary political debates (Morley 2010, 10).

1. Introduction: ancient empire and modern Empire

This paper takes as its starting point the current focus of attention upon the character of Roman imperialism and the meanings of the terms 'empire' and 'Empire'. I shall not attempt to define the specific meaning of the terms on which I draw in this paper, since there are many different definitions of empire and imperialism (e.g. Morley 2010, 18; Kiely 2010, 2-3), none of which appears entirely satisfactory. Instead, I wish to focus on the relationship of ancient empire to current Empire. The term 'Empire' here relates to the contemporary world and draws on Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's influential but contentious volume *Empire* (2000). The ancient context of this world is referred to in this paper through the use of the term 'empire', as in the particular example of the Roman empire. My paper is a contribution to the growing literature that is exploring the extent to which it is viable to attempt to study empire without a conscious appreciation of the relationship of this concept to Empire (e.g. Hingley 2005, 9-10, 117-8; Hingley 2009, 54; Willis 2007; Terrenato 2008, 234-7; Morley 2010). I also aim to re-examine some of the arguments that I communicated in my book, *Globalizing Roman Culture* (2005), taking this opportunity to answer a number of points that have been raised in response to this publication, while also drawing upon some recent studies (particularly Kierly 2010 and Morley 2010).[1]

A renewed interest in Roman imperialism has developed over the past ten years, with a variety of works that have drawn upon Hardt and Negri's claim (2000) that a transformed form of contemporary Empire with roots in the Roman imperial past has effectively reasserted its sovereignty in the modern world (see, for example, Hingley 2005; Münkler 2007; Willis 2007; Forsén and Salermi 2008; Hingley 2009; Parachami 2009; Erskine 2010, 4-5; Morley 2010; Mattingly 2011). Hardt and Negri's volume, *Empire* (2000), contests, in effect, that Roman imperial culture has been transformed into a contemporary world Empire focused on global forces of economic integration. Today's world is one in which direct control of territory by individual nation states hold far

[1] I think that some misunderstandings of my aims and objectives in this book arose from the title that was given to the volume by the publishers. I wanted to title the book *Globalization and Rome* but was told that this might impact upon sales. The title under which the book was published perhaps gives the reader the impression that the volume is intended to promote the use of the concept of globalization in the context of the classical Roman empire: my intention was, actually, rather more complex, as I aim to show here.

less significance than was the case until recently, as national borders have been progressively broken down by population movements and the growth of international economic networking. Since the publication of this influential and contested book, a number of events have provided additional stimulation for a developing focus on the character of contemporary Empire—these include the potential challenge mounted by China to the global dominance of the USA together with the international actions of the West since the devastating attack on New York during September 2001. In this context, there has been an increasing neo-conservative interest in seeing the USA as 'the New Rome' and a number of journalists and some historians (particularly Niall Ferguson) have made a concerted effort to present the image of a 'benevolent empire' that was conceived in very similar terms to Roman empire (Pedro Lopez Barja pers com). In addition, in the past decade, military and territorial issues have, once again, become far more significant in the actions of the West, causing many academics in a variety of disciplines to cast a directly critical light on the idea of American imperialism (c.f. Kierly 2010).

Hardt and Negri's volume has stimulated a significant reaction from a variety of scholars, working upon Empire from a variety of disciplinary perspectives (e.g. Balakrishnan [ed.] 2003; Boron 2005; Passavant and Dean [eds.] 2004; Negri 2006). The changing meaning and context of the concepts of e/Empire in the modern world are addressed in a particularly informative manner in Ray Kiely's recent synthesis of the evolution of concepts of imperialism (Kiely 2010). Classical studies have also become involved in this debate. During the past twelve months, three new books—by Andrew Erskine (2010), David Mattingly (2011) and Neville Morley (2010)—have turned detailed attention to the topics of the Roman empire and Roman imperialism. Other volumes that have been produced in the past decade include a collection of articles on Roman imperialism (Champion [ed.] 2004), a detailed study of the changing meanings of the Latin word '*imperium*' in the Roman republic and imperial periods (Richardson 2008), a comparative volume on Empire which selects examples from different periods of history and various regions of the world (Alcock et al. 2001) and a lengthy and ambitious volume entitled *Conceiving the Roman Empire*, which compares China and classical Rome (Mutschler and Mittag 2008).

The rise of this critical focus of attention upon the Roman empire is not entirely a product of the past ten years. Indeed, two volumes that addressed 'post-colonial' accounts of Roman imperialism were produced during the 1990s (Webster and Cooper [eds.] 1996; Mattingly [ed.] 1997). The papers in these volumes reflected a reaction that occurred at this time to a dominant archaeological tradition, in Britain and elsewhere, which focused on Romanization of the peoples of the Roman empire. They formed part of a concerted effort to present new ways of addressing identity and social change in the Roman empire. The pace of publication of books that address the meaning of empire and imperialism in the world of Rome, however, has witnessed a dramatic increase over the past decade. Setting these archaeological and ancient historical accounts in a broader theoretical context, a serious focus of attention has emerged since 2000 on the reception of classical models, including the methods and theories through which materials derived from classic Roman sources—including texts and

archaeological materials—have been use to construct imperial and colonial knowledge in various countries in the modern world (including Edwards [ed.] 1999; Hingley [ed.] 2001; Goff [ed.] 2005; Hingley 2005; Hurst and Owen [ed.] 2005; Mattingly 2002; Shumate 2006; Hardwick and Gillespie [eds.] 2007; Bradley [ed.] 2010).

Taken together, these publications include a wide variety of current approaches to the character of Roman expansion. Individual authors addressed Roman attitudes to empire, the infrastructure of Roman imperial control and the reception of Roman models in later societies. Other accounts compare the Roman imperial experience to the character of other empires in different places and times. What unites many of these publications is an interest in how knowledge of the ancient world relates to the politics and culture of our current age. Such approaches to the genealogy of ideas of empire, take on board the issue raised by Hardt and Negri in 2000, through a focus on the origins of contemporary concepts that appear to remain fundamental to Empire (c.f. Robertson and Inglis 2006; Willis 2007).

A developing interest in Empire provides part of the reason for the increased attention that archaeologists, ancient historians and classists are paying to the genealogical roots of Western conceptions of empire and imperialism (Hingley 2005, 9; Shumate 2006, 155; Willis 2007; Erskine 2010, 3; Morley 2010, 6). Shumate (2006, 12) emphasizes the 'common threads' that exist in the rhetoric of the ancient and modern worlds, exploring ideas of nation, empire and continuity. Ali Parachami (2009) explores the continuity and transformation of ideas of hegemonic peace and empire in the empires of Rome, Britain and America. Taken together, the volumes that I have listed—and other works not recorded here—demonstrate the development of a serious cross-disciplinary focus of attention on Roman imperialism. To my knowledge, there are also at least three imperialism networks operating at the present time in Europe and the USA, drawing knowledge from a variety of disciplines to create discussions and debates that cross disciplinary and chronological boundaries.

It is clear that an immense gulf separates us from the world of classical Rome. Why should current concerns play such a fundamental role in classical studies? This paper focuses critical attention on the issue of the relationship between past and present. In particular, it emphasizes the impossibility of separating modern accounts of the Roman empire from the historical context within which these works have been (and are) created. In the actions of creative thought that brings the Roman empire into being, the past and present are deeply mutually implicated. As a result, we cannot entirely distance the classical materials that we study from the modern contexts in which our studies take place—nor should we necessarily attempt to do so. Although empire and imperialism forms an area of interest that has come, to a degree, to unite classists, ancient historians and archaeologists in Britain and the USA, it is notable that many of the edited volumes that have been produced continue to focus on single disciplinary approaches, as a comparison of the papers included in the volumes by Goff (ed. 2005), Hardwick and Gillespie (eds. 2007) and Hurst and Owen (eds. 2005) demonstrates. Other studies aim to provide cross-disciplinary perspectives on particular themes (e.g. Alcock et. al. [eds.] 2001; Bradley [ed.] 2010). Such

approaches are to be welcomed, but they need to include a clear focus on the ways that the evidence for the classical past has been used by imperial discourses.

2. Idealism

Studies of imperialism in the ancient and the contemporary worlds cannot be neatly separated, since Roman models have been drawn upon particularly deeply in the West since the Renaissance (Hingley 2005; Morley 2010, 10-1). Despite this, there is an inherited tradition in the field of classical studies that contends that the modern world has absolutely nothing to do with studies of the classical past; this suggests that studies of ancient society have absolutely no political significance in the current age. This is a tradition that I have defined as 'idealist' (Hingley 2005, 4). The idealist perspective provides an approach that the recent works on the historiography and reception of classical culture have aimed to challenging by pointing out how classical knowledge, throughout history, has served political, military and cultural purposes (e.g. Hingley 2005; Shumate 2006; Goff 2007; Morley 2010). By drawing on the contemporary world in studying the classical past, ideas are reproduced in an anachronistic manner, often without any form of conscious acknowledgment.

An influential idea has long existed that the study of classical Greece and Rome has no political connection with the present—that our understanding of the Roman world can be neatly divided off from the contemporary political and economic issues that occupy our minds. This idealist conception suggests that immersing oneself in classical texts and attempting to live in a Roman style creates a privileged knowledge of the classical past (Hingley 2005, 122 n. 16). For this reason, some historians have restricted the use of the concept of 'imperialism' to modern empires in order to avoid anachronism, since it appears that the Romans had no conscious and explicit ideology of expansionism (Morley 2010, 18; c.f. Richardson 2008). This would suggest that the concept of imperialism is out of context if it is used to account for the expansion of the Roman state during the late first millennium BC and early first millennium AD.

I have explored the problem with this idealist perspective by drawing on the work of Karl Galinsky in his book, *Augustan Culture* (1996). Galinsky's directly positive view of Augustus' achievements is created in a manner that casts a directly positive light on the politics and culture of contemporary America (Hingley 2005, 6-7). In comparable terms, in an earlier age, the theory of Romanization drew deeply upon Western concepts of colonizing thought (Hingley 2000). However we conceive Roman imperialism and empire today, we carry the thoughts and the biases of our present world into the images that we create to represent classical Rome, whether these images are developed as a positive reflection on the contemporary world, as in the case of Galinsky, or whether they are negatively defined, as for example in David Mattingly's *An Imperial Possession* (2006`0.

Idealist approaches refuse to acknowledge the fundamental roles that models derived from classical Greece and Rome have played in the creation of modern concepts of nationhood and empire and the way that this role continues today. As Nancy Shumante (2006) has argued, classical languages

and concepts were fundamental to the education of the colonial elites of Western nations and helped to carry the style and content of Roman imperial rhetoric into the justification and criticism of the imperial actions of Western nations. Although the learning of classical language may no longer be a key requirement for members of the economic and political elite of contemporary nations of Europe and North America, classical concepts—including idea of civilization, barbarity and the just war—remain fundamental in the political, military and humanitarian actions of Western nations today (Hingley 2005, 6), as contemporary events in the Near East and North Africa remind us. This issue is at the core of approaches that seek to study the genealogy of concepts of Empire (c.f. Balakrishnan 2003, xiii), that our understandings of the ancient world take on board and transform earlier ideas and that, in this process, the ancient world is intimately connected to the thoughts and actions of our own world. Classical Rome provides concepts and modes of thought from which it is very difficult, if note entirely impossible, for some to escape (Shumate 2006; c.f. Parchami 2009).

3. Current contexts

I am not arguing that Roman empire and contemporary Empire represent the same thing, but that current interests, concerns and intellectual traditions drive the ways that people select their texts and archaeological materials and also the ways that scholars develop ideas about the past. These issues also have a deep influence on whether new approaches are accepted or rejected by the academic community. The claim of an intimate relationship between contemporary scholarship and the study of the classical past, however, raises the thorny issue of anachronism. Nancy Shumate (2006, 12) argues a need for caution over the anachronism that might result in 'casting ancient cultures in familiar terms and not taking them on their own.' Morley (2010, 20) emphasizes that there is a constant need to aim to avoid creating transhistorical accounts of imperialism. The need to avoid anachronism—to distance ideas about the past from our comprehension of the present—forms one of the reasons that idealist perspective were developed in the first place. By arguing that the past is entirely different from the present, it is possible to work to eliminate anachronism—or is it?

Morley (2010, 9) argues that the types of coherent and stable views of Roman imperialism that support modern colonial discourse—from the nineteenth century to the present day—ignore the highly fragmentary nature of our understanding of the Roman empire. A similar consideration relates to recent neo-conservative attempt to represent American/Roman imperialism in a positive light. Morley argues that the fragmentary nature of our knowledge provides one reason for the need to adopt modern theories if we are to fill in the gaps in our knowledge of classical Rome. An immersion in the texts and material cultures derived from the classical past emphasizes the need to find a balance between the sameness and differences that exist between Roman and modern imperialism (*ibid*, 20). For this reason, Morley follows an approach that:

> Is a matter of balancing generalizations with specifics: drawing on modern theories as a source of ideas about how societies work and therefore how the ancient evidence might (rather than must) be interpreted, and modifying the understanding of 'imperialism' as a more

> general historical phenomenon in the light of the Roman experience (*ibid*, 21).

His study of the Roman roots of imperialism—which includes consideration of the dynamics of Roman rule, the economic impact of imperialism and the nature of cultural change—pursues this agenda by drawing on a number of Latin texts.

Evidently, subsuming oneself in relevant materials derived from imperial Rome—including the texts, objects and sites—provides a far better context for the development of accounts of classical Rome than any too direct use of modern theory or analogies without recourse to relevant classical materials. A valuable example of a detailed contextual study of language is provided by John Richardson's (2008) analytical consideration of the Latin terms *imperium* and *provinciae*. This seeks to explore the origin and changing meaning of these terms in republican and imperial Rome through a study of their meanings in the available Latin texts. Richardson also considers how the meanings of these terms changed through time. I should say that a study of the later use of the concept of *imperium* from the second century to the present day, including a consideration of its transformation into the ideas that define the concept 'imperialism' would be extremely useful, as would a detailed study of the changing meanings of e/Empire. As Richardson's scholarly study shows, however, this would be a truly vast and a deeply challenging international project. Other concepts that are fundamental to study would benefit from a comparable approach, including the variable ways in which the concept of 'Romanization was adopted in different places and times (c.f. Hingley 2008a).

Romanization theory in twentieth century Britain was (presumably) unconsciously anachronistic in the way that it adopted ideas of the superiority of Rome over colonized peoples and modeled change in terms of fairly simple and linear concepts of progress (Hingley 2000, 33-4). I say that this process of interpretation was probably unconscious since Romanists during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not explicitly address the ways that their arguments about the Roman empire drew upon modern interests and approaches. In Morley's terms, the Edwardians needed to draw upon theory to interpret the empire, just in the same manner as we do today. They drew on conceptions that derived from their understandings of current world, modeling the Roman empire partly in terms of contemporary imperial thought (c.f. Hingley 2005, 33-6).

4. Globalization and Roman Culture

To summarize the argument so far, we cannot simply separate the ideas that we produce today about Roman imperialism from ideas about the character of the contemporary world, since our approaches to classical Rome cannot avoid drawing upon current interests and concerns. The genealogy of the ways in which the Roman rhetoric of empire has been used within the West demonstrates this point (Shumate 2006). Immersion in the writings produced by classical gentlemen cannot really help us to escape from this conundrum, since most of these writings have been well-known since the Renaissance and have often been mined for use in determining just the types of ideology that imperial discourse has focused upon (*ibid*). Indeed, I am arguing that this

is the specific reason why our studies of Roman imperialism need to engage with the political uses of the concept in the present, to ensure that we are clear about how our works engage with ideas about how certain dominant players seek to manage and manipulate our world (Hingley 2005, 119-20; Hingley 2009; c.f. Morley 2010, 10).

In these terms, the study of Roman imperialism becomes, not only a consideration of the way that Rome expanded across such a vast area, incorporating people along the way (e.g. Terrenato 2008), but also 'a means of understanding and questioning modern conceptions of empire and imperialism, and the way they are deployed in contemporary political debates' (Morley 2010, 10). I feel that it is helpful for those who study Roman imperialism to pursue both of these strands of research rather than focusing attention on either one or the other. Evidently, Romanists will want to think critically about how the Roman empire came to expand across such a vast territory and also the means by with society across the Roman world was held together. However, if we do not look at the context in which our knowledge of Roman imperialism is developing—the cultural and political context in which theories about the past are adopted and transformed—we are likely to continue to construct an inappropriate divide between the past from the present, an idea that replicates the idealist perspective defined above.

I wish to draw further on this idea by exploring the value of globalization studies to the comprehension of Roman culture and empire. There is a developing trend in recent work on Roman imperialism and Roman culture that adopts approaches derived from the study of the globalization and applies these to the world of classical Rome (for example, Hingley 2005; Hitchner 2007; Morley 2010, 125-7; Witcher 2000). Some of these works are based on the assumption that the modern economic system that defines the world can be of use for the models of the Roman economy that are developed today. I would argue that such a use of globalization is inappropriate, since the forces that unite and divide people across the globe today are very different in character from those that characterized the Roman world.

Not all authors who draw on the idea of globalization in studying classical Rome are attempting to do the same thing with the approaches that they adopt. This is not particularly surprising, since methods and theories for interpreting the contemporary global world vary dramatically, with accounts that privilege economic, cultural and linguistic forces of integration and differentiation (see individual papers in Inda and Rosaldo [eds.] 2002; Krishnaswamy and Hawlet [eds.] 2008). As such, there is no consistent and coherent body of thought on globalization for classical scholars to draw upon. Many of the approaches to Roman imperialism and culture that draw upon globalization appear to view it as providing useful analogies that can be adopted in the study of Roman empire and culture (see Hitchner 2007; Witcher 1997), but I wish here to focus on the politics of how E/empire is envisaged through a focus on globalization (c.f. Hingley 2005, 1; Hingley 2009, 61-2). This aims to turn the type of critical focus exemplified by the attempts to deconstruct the theory of Romanization onto current accounts of Roman identity and cultural change—the intention is to clearly demonstrate how political and economic concerns in the modern world continue to inform

the new accounts of identity and social change in the Roman empire that have been produced during the past fifteen years.

I should provide a point of clarification, since much of the literature on globalization in the modern world implies well-integrated markets, world wide capital flows, etc. and all these phenomena were clearly absent in the case of the Roman empire. In many contemporary writings on globalization, the phenomena is primarily seen as related to markets and the economy, but here I am defining the term in a rather wider, cultural sense—an idea that draws upon the global origins of Western ideas of culture and civilization. This approach derives from Roland Robertson and David Inglis' (2006) efforts to define a '*global animus* (global spirit)' that characterized much ancient Greek and Roman thought and which these authors view as present in a transformed state in contemporary society. In these terms, the aspects of classical thought that Hardt and Negri (2000, 163, 314-6) view as fundamental to the global state of Empire today are related to the ideas and standards developed in some of the classical texts. These arguments are developed further in two of my earlier publications (Hingley 2005; Hingley 2009).

In particular, I wish to discuss two comments that have been made in response to the arguments articulated in my book, *Globalizing Roman Culture*. These will help me to emphasize and develop some of points that I have explored above. In my book, I aimed to address the context of contemporary studies of Roman imperialism and cultural change in order to find new approaches that replaced the problems of the formerly dominant approaches to the Romanization of the empire. Reflecting on the sustained critique of Romanization that has occurred since the mid 1990s, I argued that the specific value of the adoption of globalization as a body of theory is that it can force a conscious and specific focus on the context of the anachronistic way in which ideas of empire/Empire have operated in Roman studies. In an interesting and productive study of Roman art, Peter Stewart (2010, 58) has argued that the application of theories derived from globalization to the Roman world is understandable, if anachronistic. To me, this misses the main point that leads me to draw upon the concept of 'Globalizing Roman Culture'. This approach is intended to force an explicit acknowledgment of the inherent anachronism inherent in current approaches to Roman identity and social change. In my writings, I have aimed to use globalization to study Roman culture specifically in order to articulate this particular issue and I have consciously attempted to draw attention to the, apparently often unconscious, assumptions that lie behind the ideas of Roman cultural change that have come to replace Romanization since the 1990s. If we are conscious of these issues, it is possible to situate current work more clearly with regard to Empire without indulging in idealism.

In other words, adopting ideas derived from globalization studies should be accompanied by an overt and conscious acceptance of the anachronism inherent in using these approaches to interrogate the classical world. To paraphrase Morley's arguments, writing about the globalization of Roman Culture provides a means of understanding and questioning the ways that modern conceptions of Empire and imperialism continue to be used to inform Roman studies, and also the relationship of studies of Roman culture and cultural change to contemporary political debates (see Hingley 2005, 118-20;

Hingley 2009, 70-1). We need to draw on theories about contemporary Empire precisely because of the gaps in our knowledge of the Roman empire, which requires that we use contemporary knowledge to give meaning to the past. Mommsen and Haverfield drew on contemporary ideas by developing Latin writings that had articulated an idea of the progress of peoples within the ambit of the Roman empire from barbarism to civilization, but they also achieved an intellectual coherence for their accounts by drawing on late nineteenth century ideas, including concepts related to biological and cultural evolution and ideas about nationhood and imperialism (Hingley 2005, 33). Mommsen's work had a significant role in nation building in Italy and Germany precisely because it articulated with contemporary interests and concerns (Mouritsen 1998; Wulff 2003). Haverfield's writings on the Romanization of Roman Britain were powerful and long-lived, precisely because they fed on and supplemented contemporary British imperial and national interests (Hingley 2000, 34-5; Hingley 2007). Can we really claim that contemporary works are free from comparable influences?

There is no way to avoid the process through which present concerns and interests influence the writing of accounts about the Roman past, but one significant issue in our more self-reflexive times is to be consciously aware of the connotations of this issue. It is perhaps rather too grand to suppose that contemporary writings about Roman imperialism might seek to provide a direct and effective challenge to the methods and theories that are adopted in creating and managing Empire today. I would emphasize, however, that an explicit adoption of ideas derived from globalization aims to unmask the options and limitations that this theory presents. Contemporary works can seek to critically address the ways that concepts of empire and imperialism derived from the Roman world are drawn upon in contemporary politics and economics (c.f. Hardt and Negri 2000; Hingley 2005, 118-20; Hingley 2009, 70-1). In these terms, the intellectual methods inherent in an approach to globalization and Roman culture is a deliberately rhetorical device that aims to promote a critical reflection on the role of classical knowledge and its relationship to the present political, military and economic actions of the West. It is also more than this, since we require coherent approaches if we are to understand the nature of Roman imperialism. Indeed, another aim of my book (Hingley 2005) was to review some of the most interesting of the recent accounts that aimed to comprehend Roman identity and cultural change.

In this context, I drew deeply on Greg Woolf's work, *Becoming Roman*. Woolf (1988; 2001) produced an elegant interpretation for Roman cultural identity and social change that explored the ways that new ideas were adopted in local contexts in the Roman empire because they communicated powerful imperial concepts to people in the provinces. My analysis of Woolf's work was intended to communicate its significance but also to raise some issues about the context within this work originated and the influence that it has had. Firstly, 'becoming Roman' remains largely elite-focused, like the approaches to Romanization that it seeks to replace. Much of the attention in Woolf's account is focused on the landed elite and the urban dwellers of Roman Gaul. I also explored some additional pieces of research that have attempted to create more fragmented ideas of Roman identity, projects that explore the roles of military culture and traders in the Roman empire (Hingley 2005, 91-

116). This research defines alternative less elite-focused cultures that existed in the Roman empire. Secondly, I aimed to explore the ways in which Woolf, together with the writers on which he drew, have been deeply influenced by studies of the identities and cultures of people in the contemporary world (*ibid*, 47-8). In effect, 'becoming Roman' is (inevitably) based on ideas about the contemporary world, theories that have been used to fill gaps and to provide inspiration. The only problem with this approach, from the perspective pursued in my writings, is that the method is not explicitly acknowledged in Woolf's account of Roman identity.

Henry Hurst (2010, 103), in a study of archaeological approaches to cultural change in the Roman world, has picked up upon this issue. He suggests that my comments on Woolf's (1998, 347) view of Rome as an organization that metabolizes other matter and is itself transformed in the process is overcritical (c.f. Hingley 2005, 47). This is a fair point, but I would argue that it fails to pick up the consciously reflexive focus of the approach that I was seeking to adopt. I was explicitly aiming to establish the intellectual context of some of the useful recent writings that have developed ideas of Roman cultural change (*ibid*, 12-3). Indeed, as I emphasized (*ibid*, 47), Woolf's volume, *Becoming Roman*, is an extremely useful work in this regard. But I also aimed to focus specific attention of the current context within which the work of Woolf and others (including my own contribution) have developed.

It is inevitable that the approach to becoming Roman that Woolf develops takes on board ideas derived from studies of the contemporary global world, ideas that create less dichotomous and more intricate patterns of inequality (c.f. Balakrishnan 2003, x; Hingley 2005, 120). In *Globalizing Roman Culture*, I was not seeking to suggest that there is necessarily anything inherently wrong with such an approach to re-conceptualizing Roman identity. Rather, I was arguing that it is important to keep in mind the political connotations of the contemporary ideas that we create, adapt and use in our accounts of the classical past. The ideas about the contemporary world that help to inform our transforming ideas about Roman identity and cultural change are certainly not value-free in political and cultural terms. Hardt and Negri (2000), for example, see Empire as having grown out of transformed earlier colonial relations, taking on board dominant forms of imperial rhetoric in the process. My contributions to the debate focus on the importance of a critical focus on the role of classical knowledge in contemporary society (c.f. Shumate 2006; Willis 2007; Morley 2010).

Accounts that project a close link between the contemporary West and classical Roman culture continue to reflect the political uses of genealogies of imperialism. They may also continue to categorize and exclude others in ways that are used to serve to justify contemporary imperial acts today—for example through the use of concepts such as that of the just war, the bringing of order to the disorderly and the mission to civilize/democratize (Hingley 2005, 120; Morley 2010). As a result, we need to keep working to communicate the argument that classical scholarship is deeply embedded within the politics of the present, since only by acknowledging this can we be confident that our own works will not be misinterpreted, or even misused. I feel that the approach that I am advocating enriches our studies by giving

them a clearer analytical and more cross-disciplinary focus and also by providing a clearer sense of historical depth (c.f. Wohl 2003, 98).

6. Summary

In the terms pursued in this paper, I would argue that a focus on the context of globalization and Roman culture provides a means to highlight the issue of the genealogy of the ideas inherent in the logic of thoughts about Empire. In these terms, writing globalization into Roman culture and imperialism is not an attempt:

1. To suggest that Rome prefigured the contemporary world in creating modern global forces of economic integration,
2. To argue forcefully that globalization studies offer us a means to create improved understandings of Roman imperialism and of the people of the Roman empire, or
3. To attack those who may appear to be using such approaches in their accounts of the Roman empire.

Rather it is part of an effort to contextualize the contemporary study of the Roman empire and to interrogate the intellectual context of our approaches. This is an important aim since it can help us to explore the genealogies of the powerful ideas of empire that have continued to be called-upon and have been transformed in the Western world in the recent past and in the present.

To study of the genealogy of imperialism through the history of past and current approaches to Roman identity and social change is not so much a critical process of interrogation as it is an intellectual exploration of significance that is based on the idea that, in order to move forward in a constructive way, we always need to critically assess developing approaches. In this way, we can attempt to find a balanced position that explores both the similarities and the differences that exist between the Roman empire and contemporary Empire (Hingley 2005, 118-20). We can also seek to emphasize the connections that are sometimes claimed in order to undermine any remaining confidence that exists in the idea that contemporary imperial actions are justified and ethical.

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Richard Hingley, Durham University, UK, May 2011